UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
28th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 10 November 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. MONGBE	(Benin)
later:	Mr. ARELLANO (Vice-Chairman)	(Mexico)
later:	Mr. MONGBE (Chairman)	(Benin)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

(b) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

(c) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

(d) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME

AGENDA ITEM 154: UNITED NATIONS INTERIM OFFICES (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.28
9 December 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-82274 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/182, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/279, A/48/321, A/48/338, A/48/359, A/48/445-S/26501, A/48/485; A/C.2/48/4)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (E/1993/35)

(b) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

(c) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

(d) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME

AGENDA ITEM 154: UNITED NATIONS INTERIM OFFICES (continued) (A/48/146 and Add.1, A/48/585)

1. Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland), noting that various proposals had been made to enhance the efficiency of the development system, said that field offices might well become an essential component of the new development order. In order to achieve a successful transformation of operational activities, bridges must be built between the proposals contained in draft resolution A/47/L.58 and those put forward by the Nordic countries. Universality must be reconciled with efficiency and the transparency of the decision-making process must be ensured. One possibility might be to convene special segments at the sessions of the governing bodies, lasting two or three days, which would be open to all Member States and to national representatives with interests in specific regions.

2. The international community should examine how to make better use of the resources of the United Nations development system and how to strengthen the impact of development activities. Resolution 47/199 on triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system contained many valuable guidelines for revitalizing the United Nations and expanding its role in human and sustainable development.

3. The transition to a market economy and democracy in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe was a difficult and painful process that called for enhanced exchange of experience and increased flows of resources. Technical cooperation could help to alleviate the adverse social effects of the painful transformation process and guarantee that it was indeed a transition not a revolution. A successful completion of the transition and the integration of those countries in the world economy would benefit the international community as a whole. The difficulties inherent in the restructuring of United Nations economic activities should not be allowed to hamper development cooperation. Since the recipient countries were investing tremendous human and material resources in development cooperation, the donor community should respond in kind. The new Polish Government attached great importance to the intellectual, cultural and economic dimensions of development and the need to invest in human capital. His country therefore hoped to enlarge its cooperation with the United Nations in the area of human and sustainable development.

4. Mr. AL DOSARI (Bahrain) said that the building of endogenous capacities was essential for sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21. He commended the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its role in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries and in strengthening the capacity of the private and public sectors to administer UNDP-sponsored projects. He thanked it for assisting his Government in the preparation of Bahrain's fifth country programme, which focused on human resources development, protection of the environment and diversification and management of economic resources.

5. UNDP had helped to provide guidance on follow-up of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In that connection, he called for enhanced cooperation and coordination between UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and expressed the hope that UNDP would help to provide increased protection of environmental systems in countries where such systems were under threat, as well as all possible technical assistance and consultancy services to help to deal with the environmental pollution that continued to affect his region in the wake of the Gulf war.

6. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh), while noting the steps taken to implement General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199 in such key areas as programming, national execution, decentralization and the resident coordinator system, expressed concern at the lack of progress on overall implementation of the resolutions.

7. To be successful the programme approach required sufficient decentralization and adequate technical capacity at the field level. Programme and project formulation, monitoring and evaluation needed to be simplified and harmonized. Programmes should be more responsive to national priorities and ensure greater involvement of the national planning authorities. National capacity must be enhanced and financial and programming accountability ensured. Decentralization and delegation of authority should take place in an environment of trust between headquarters and the field offices.

8. Resident coordinators had an important role to play in providing leadership and coordination of operational activities. However, Governments must retain direct access to the programmes, funds and expertise of individual agencies. While resident coordinators might coordinate humanitarian assistance, they should not have any political function. The issue of coordination among United Nations agencies should not be confused with the establishment of interim offices. Any action which resulted in the merging of political functions would be contrary to the neutrality of the United Nations. The proposals contained in document A/48/146/Add.1 needed further examination.

9. Resources for operational activities remained far below the level needed to meet the requirements of the developing countries and he therefore urged donors to increase their contributions for such purposes on a predictable, continuous, assured and preferably multi-year basis. The situation of the least developed countries had deteriorated alarmingly in recent years. He hoped that priority would continue to be given to their needs, and that concerted efforts would be made to implement the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

10. Mr. CHANTHAVILAY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and noted with concern that the results of the 1992 and 1993 United Nations Pledging Conferences for Development Activities had been below target. Efforts should be made to achieve a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, as called for in General Assembly resolution 47/199 and special attention should be devoted to the least developed countries.

11. National execution should be the norm for United Nations programmes and projects, which should take into account the needs and capacities of the recipient countries. His delegation welcomed the agreement on a common interpretation of national execution reached at the March 1993 session of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (E/1993/73, para. 4).

12. The Lao Government attached great importance to international multilateral cooperation. The UNDP country programme in his country focused on support to the "new economic mechanism", development of physical infrastructure and human resource development. The UNICEF programmes in his country addressed health care, basic education, rural water supply, environmental sanitation and women in development. The first United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) country programme in his country was aimed at improving the quality of life, the advancement of women and enhancement of the national capacity to integrate population factors into development planning. He expressed his thanks to those and other international organizations for their valuable assistance and support.

13. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that, while it was clear that the resources available to UNDP were insufficient in relation to the growing needs of the developing countries, and should be expanded, it was also necessary to ensure that they were put to effective and creative use. More attention should be devoted to the social and environmental aspects of sustained development, particularly within the framework of structural adjustment policies. UNDP should play an important role in defining and promoting the concept of sustainable human development, taking into consideration the individual priorities of developing countries, and should place implementation of Agenda 21 among its priorities. It should also be one of the main channels for the transfer of technology, concentrating on areas which might contribute directly to sustainable development and endeavouring to ensure careful and precise formulation of appropriate projects. Particular efforts should be devoted to agricultural development, agricultural extension, rural community development, development of arid and semi-arid zones, environment and water and energy resources.

14. The development of human resources was crucial to development. Israel's rapid economic development was partly a result of the nation's preoccupation with social progress. Likewise, technical cooperation among developing countries was essential for sustainable development. Israel had been sharing its know-how and experience with many countries for over three decades.

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

15. Multilateral assistance should continue to receive the necessary support from Governments. At the same time, developing countries should continue to evaluate their use of multilateral funding. Finally, his delegation saw enormous economic potential in the Middle East; the peace process and the recent historic agreements should open new avenues for technical cooperation and joint programmes. In that connection, the important role of UNDP should be enhanced and expanded.

16. Mr. ARELLANO (Mexico) reiterated his delegation's support for General Assembly resolution 47/199, particularly the second, third, eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs and paragraphs 38 to 41 on strengthening the role of the resident coordinator system. Noting the proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations interim offices (A/48/146/Add.1) concerning the establishment of a post of United Nations representative, he said that, given the importance of operational activities for development, States must be carefully consulted regarding any proposed reforms. The mandates of each of the bodies, organizations and programmes in the system must also be respected in that process.

17. While coordination of the various programmes and departments of the United Nations was important, it was essentially an internal exercise which should not affect the established relationship between Member States and the Organization. Nor should operational activities be linked to political concerns. Therefore, there were no grounds for assigning political functions to resident coordinators as part of the effort to reduce costs and improve efficiency in the Secretariat of the United Nations. In conclusion, his delegation supported the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Group of 77 at the Committee's previous meeting.

18. Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea) welcomed the statements delivered by the representatives of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations in which they reported on their activities. The changes contemplated by the United Nations could have an adverse impact, particularly in the developing countries, on the delivery of social and technical services, information, humanitarian assistance and the equitable distribution of financial resources in the international community.

19. Papua New Guinea had proposed an agenda item entitled "United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation", which would be considered the following week. It was his delegation's strong belief that the United Nations could play a leading role in identifying obstacles to development and offering practical advice on how peoples could participate in it more fully. The proposed initiative also called for the appointment of an ad hoc panel of distinguished experts and experienced persons to prepare a practical report, based on the experience of different countries and economies and on a critical analysis of practical and implementable options.

20. His delegation was pleased to learn that the operational activities of various organizations of the United Nations system were aimed at meeting people's primary needs, enlarging their choices and making development more democratic, people-oriented and practical, particularly in the developing economies. In that connection, it wished to acknowledge the important role

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

played by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations. Papua New Guinea was particularly grateful to UNDP, which had assisted it in preparing its proposal for the initiative and in organizing a national and a regional workshop in Port Moresby on opportunity and participation. His delegation hoped that the initiative on opportunity and participation would be a valuable input for the Secretary-General's agenda for development. It was also to be hoped that the international community would increase its financial support for UNDP, and that those resources would be used effectively and creatively by recipient countries.

21. Following the example set by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, international consensus on new approaches to development cooperation should be an integral part of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. His Government was fully committed to delivering real services to all its citizens, especially in the traditional village communities, and it would continue to work closely with the programmes for sustainable development already established by the various United Nations agencies.

22. Mr. RAKOTONAIVO (Madagascar) said that the effort at rationalization came at a particularly difficult time marked, on the one hand, by persistent, increasingly serious problems in the developing countries and, on the other hand, by difficulties in providing financing to a growing number of recipient countries and in meeting new demands for emergency assistance and for assistance to developing countries' structural reforms and their implementation of Agenda 21. The reforms outlined in resolutions 44/211 and 47/199 must be implemented urgently in order to address those complex problems.

23. His delegation welcomed the achievement of agreement in the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on common interpretations of the programme approach, national execution and the country strategy note. How viable those concepts were in the field would depend largely on how well adapted they were to each country's particular economic and social situation. His delegation attached great importance to the strengthening of national capacity and the training of national executives. However, the country strategy note referred to in resolution 47/199 should be elaborated by the recipient Governments. His delegation would continue to support measures for the harmonization and simplification of procedures.

24. Given that resources for United Nations funds and programmes were already very limited, the fact that lower voluntary contributions had forced UNDP to set its resource levels at 75 per cent of the established indicative planning figures was disturbing, particularly since General Assembly resolution 47/199 had stressed the need for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities. New financing strategies must be urgently identified.

25. The difficulties in achieving a consensus on the restructuring of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors should not delay the implementation of agreements already reached concerning operational activities.

(Mr. Rakotonaivo, Madagascar)

Lastly, his delegation strongly supported the position of the Group of 77, which opposed the assignment of political functions to the resident coordinator, and hoped that the consultations under way on that proposal would result in a consensus.

26. Mr. NIE Hualiang (China) said that the serious problems created by the unfavourable international economic environment, particularly in the least developed countries, made it imperative to reform operational activities for development. Peace and sustainable development, the Organization's two main priorities, should be given equal weight. And yet, while expenditures on peace-keeping activities had increased six or seven fold in the space of two years, UNDP had been forced to scale down its programmes by 25 per cent and other agencies had had to take similar measures. His delegation was deeply concerned by that trend and appealed to developed countries to increase their contributions to United Nations development activities. The current process of reforming the United Nations in the economic and social fields would have little effect if the Organization's development activities were not adequately financed.

27. It was also disturbing to see that a certain donor country had imposed very harsh political conditions on recipient countries, in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of universality and neutrality repeatedly affirmed by the relevant General Assembly resolutions. It was unconscionable that one country should attempt to impose its will on the United Nations in order to implement its own national foreign policy. His delegation was also opposed to the efforts of a certain United Nations agency to extend its work to certain political fields outside its mandate, including elections and the establishment of law-enforcement agencies, at the expense of its traditional activities. The United Nations development agencies should focus on practical initiatives to bolster the economies of developing countries and to improve the living standards of their peoples.

28. United Nations interim offices had been established to meet the special needs of certain newly independent States, not to perform general functions. Institutionalizing the temporary activities of those offices would be unfair to many other recipient States. Since the interim offices had been in existence for barely one year and their relationships with resident coordinator offices and other United Nations organs were still unclear, it would be unwise to confirm their functions hastily or to expand them through a change of name. As for the proposal to expand the functions of the United Nations resident coordinator offices, he recalled that resolution 47/199 reaffirmed the principle of neutrality and the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. Therefore, additional functions in the areas of public information, human rights and preventive diplomacy should not be assigned to the resident coordinators but rather should be handled by existing machinery.

29. The political implications of having the resident coordinator double as United Nations representative exceeded the scope of resolution 47/199 on operational activities for development. In view of the Secretary-General's recent statement that interim offices should not assume political functions, there were no grounds for appointing United Nations representatives. His

(Mr. Nie Hualiang, China)

delegation agreed with the Canadian representative that there should be no blanket formula for strengthening the resident coordinator system but rather that measures should be taken on a country-by-country basis.

30. Mr. OLISEMEKA (Nigeria) noted that, according to the World Economic Survey 1993, the negative trend in the world economy was likely to persist in 1993 and beyond, with inevitable consequences for the poorest countries.

31. United Nations efforts to adapt to new realities were commendable, but Governments should be encouraged to participate in that process. His delegation therefore welcomed the emphasis placed in General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the promotion of the indigenous capacity of the developing countries and national execution, and the efforts of the United Nations system to implement the reforms outlined in General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the new provisions of resolution 47/199. It commended the work of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

32. His delegation favoured the adoption of a three-phased coordinated approach at the country level in order to develop a single United Nations country strategy, build on national efforts and contribute to the attainment of national, sectoral and multisectoral goals in an integrated manner. To that end, the country strategy note was essential. By implication, his delegation also supported the idea of a single United Nations office, representing a unified, coordinated United Nations presence in any given country. Ultimately, that would strengthen the role of the resident coordinator and widen the pool of qualified development professionals eligible for appointment. The multidimensional nature and proliferation of United Nations field activities had made the coordinated approach and strengthened resident coordinator system called for in resolution 47/199 more crucial than ever.

33. UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) were to be commended on their activities at the grass-roots level. UNDP had demonstrated that reaching out to people was the key to effectiveness. His delegation also wished to express its thanks to the Governing Council of UNDP for committing additional funds to cover technical assistance for the implementation of Nigeria's fourth country programme. As there was still a shortfall of $600 million, donors were urged to help provide the necessary resources.

34. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 would be greatly enhanced by a renewed commitment on the part of all donors to a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development. Voluntary contributions to operational activities for development should be seen as an international obligation rather than a charity.

35. With regard to national execution, while Governments indeed had primary responsibility for management of their development programmes and projects,

(Mr. Olisemeka, Nigeria)

given the lack of human and financial resources in developing countries, they could not fulfil these responsibilities without the collaboration of the developed countries. The United Nations should continue to serve as a development partner.

36. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that the system of United Nations operational activities for development currently faced a number of difficulties. In addition to financial problems and an increasing number of recipient countries, the system was undergoing a painful restructuring process. At the same time, UNDP and UNICEF, the principal agencies of the system - were endeavouring to keep abreast of the times and serve in the interest of peace, democracy and development. The system was constantly expanding its activities and adding new areas of cooperation, in particular with a view to promoting the "human dimension" of development. The agencies involved in operational activities should continue to concentrate their efforts in that area.

37. His delegation supported the efforts to reform United Nations operational activities and regretted that the General Assembly, at its resumed forty-seventh session, had not adopted the draft resolution on the subject. The implementation of the proposals of a number of countries, including the Nordic countries, regarding the reorganization and restructuring of the Organization's leading funding agencies and programmes would improve the effectiveness of operational activities. Measures should be taken to ensure the equal participation of Member States in the work of the governing bodies of the organizations of the operational activities system. In the opinion of his delegation, the election of members to such bodies should follow the principle of rotation. The report of the UNDP Governing Council on its organizational meeting for 1993, special session and fortieth session (E/1993/35) confirmed the tendency to strengthen the role of UNDP as the main financing and coordinating centre for multilateral technical cooperation of the United Nations system. His delegation supported the Programme's efforts to base its activities on a programme approach, improve the coordination of multilateral assistance with national development programmes, promote national execution and synchronize its activities with those of the World Bank and other partners through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

38. His delegation attached great importance to UNDP programme/project execution in the field of sustainable development, in particular the implementation of the "Capacity 21" initiative, in the field of humanitarian cooperation and human resources development.

39. His delegation also attached great importance to the activities of UNICEF to mobilize efforts to protect mothers and children, and supported the Fund's efforts to implement the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children. Ukraine welcomed the Fund's direct participation in carrying out projects to mitigate the effects of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. At the same time, UNICEF could play a greater role in protecting children from the negative effects of Ukraine's transition to a market economy.

40. While his delegation did not question the primary emphasis of operational activities on the needs of the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, it hoped that UNDP, UNICEF and other United Nations bodies

/

(Mr. Goumenny, Ukraine)

would increase their support for the programmes of countries with economies in transition.

41. Ukraine was currently experiencing a serious economic crisis. During the past two and a half years, it had not made much progress in its reform efforts and the standard of living of its population had declined drastically. His delegation hoped that United Nations agencies involved in operational activities would help solve the many problems facing Ukraine, which required not only technical assistance but also external financial development assistance.

42. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) said that multisectoral, sectoral or subsectoral strategies formulated by recipient countries based on their own priorities should provide the backdrop for coherent programming of external assistance. Assembly resolution 47/199 had requested the Secretary-General to promote an early agreement on a common interpretation of the programme approach. Once such an agreement was reached, it should be disseminated in all official languages so that States and representatives of the United Nations system would have a common point of reference.

43. His delegation fully supported the statement concerning United Nations interim offices made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the members of the Group of 77. The use of expressions such as "United Nations representative" or "Representative of the Secretary-General" raised the same concerns as those mentioned the previous year regarding the title "United Nations ambassador". It would be preferable simply to delete them. His delegation preferred to give increased responsibilities and powers of resident coordinators for programme planning and coordination as described in resolution 47/199. Furthermore, the establishment of interim offices should be optional, rather than imposed on States, and their establishment should follow a standard format, taking into account specific conditions in the country, region or subregion.

44. Mr. SOEGARDA (Indonesia) said that, in the changing global configuration of political and economic power, a multi-polar system, especially in the economic sphere, was replacing the bipolar one. The concept of development was also changing dramatically to become more responsive to the needs of the developing countries. Political, social, educational and environmental factors were increasingly recognized as part of an integrated approach. Moreover, peace and security were increasingly seen in economic and social terms as much as in military and political terms. The international community recognized the human being as central to all development efforts.

45. In that context, his delegation was greatly concerned at the decline in resources available for operational activities. UNDP, the world's largest multilateral development assistance organization, was being forced to operate with resources far below its projected targets. Obviously, the poorest and most vulnerable countries would suffer most. Lack of resources and the imposition of conditionalities on development assistance had greatly hampered implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development.

(Mr. Soegarda, Indonesia)

46. In the context of the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, the discussions of United Nations interim offices had taken on added significance. The interim office mechanism had provided a welcome framework for a more unified United Nations presence at the country level in some cases. Nevertheless, conditions were specific to each country, thus warranting different approaches. The host country should be given the opportunity to decide the type of representation best suited to its own needs. The functioning and role of interim offices should be kept under review in order to take account of the experience gained through the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. His delegation counselled caution in seeking any extension of the authority of the United Nations resident coordinators to the political sphere.

47. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that, as the largest specialized executing agency of the United Nations system, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was fully aware of the challenges facing operational activities. The food and agriculture sectors had retained their dominance in the economies of many developing countries, which depended on development efforts in those sectors. Its operational activities were largely financed through extrabudgetary resources, UNDP being the largest single funding source. FAO had broadened its funding base for operational activities through trust fund arrangements with Governments, regional and subregional bodies, including funding from developing countries themselves.

48. Significant changes in operational activities were reflected in the increasing involvement of national authorities in execution of projects, greater use of national expertise and a shift in orientation towards the programme approach and technical services. FAO supported the common United Nations system framework for the programme approach and had taken steps to pursue such an approach systematically in its activities. Noting the shift towards national execution in its fields of competence, FAO had encouraged and enhanced the involvement of national institutions and experts in its field programme activities. Expansion of national execution should take full account of differences in national capacities to implement complex projects, and national authorities must continue to have access to the experience and advice of the specialized agencies throughout the programme cycle. FAO strongly supported further decentralization of its work, but its efforts to delegate authority to the field and strengthen its field offices had been somewhat limited by availability of resources. It continued to be fully committed to the resident coordinator system.

49. Delivery of projects under UNDP-funded programmes had declined. FAO attached great importance to technical support services and adequate technical support to operational activities, particularly in cases of complex and multidisciplinary activities.

50. Mr. Arellano (Mexico), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

51. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that, in recent years, the United Nations had begun to place increasing emphasis on human development and the safeguarding of human rights. That made it necessary to adopt approaches that would take full account of the interrelationship of economic, environmental, technological,

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

demographic and other factors. The practical implementation of those goals and approaches should dictate the areas, nature and pace of the reorganization of United Nations operational activities for development. There was broad agreement on the need to strengthen inter-agency coordination at all levels, particularly at the national level in recipient countries, and also on the need to concentrate means and resources on priority programmes and projects and expand cooperation with the Bretton Woods Institutions. One way of enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities was to harmonize the programming cycles of the funding and executing agencies.

52. Operational activities in the newly independent States with economies in transition were becoming an increasingly important factor to national efforts to carry out major transformations in those countries. A system of advisory and technical assistance was being created to help develop a market infrastructure and to improve the effectiveness of external economic ties in all their aspects. In that regard, his delegation appreciated the adoption of Governing Council decision 93/15, entitled "Technical cooperation in support of the transition to a market economy and democracy in countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States". As operational activities expanded to implement the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations programmes for Belarus would place greater emphasis on environmental protection, particularly in the efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

53. His delegation commended the efforts of UNICEF to assist Belarus in solving problems of mothers and children and creating social guarantees for that vulnerable part of the population. In the light of the critical demographic situation in Belarus, the establishment of cooperation between that country and UNFPA was a matter of priority.

54. In July 1993, the United Nations Volunteers Programme had begun activities in Belarus, and proposals had already been received on the use of Turkish volunteer experts in the field of business and management and export and import. That was the first tangible evidence of East-South cooperation, which his delegation hoped to expand.

55. The establishment in 1992 of a United Nations/UNDP interim office had been a major factor in the effective implementation of joint activities of many organizations of the United Nations system in Belarus. The interim office was currently operating on the basis of two model basic agreements concluded between the Government of Belarus and the United Nations and UNDP. Those agreements regulated cooperation between Belarus and the United Nations in the field of information, and with UNDP in the field of technical development assistance. In establishing a United Nations presence in Belarus, the Secretary-General and the UNDP Administrator had had the opportunity to make use of the integrated, unified, cost-effective approach set forth in General Assembly resolution 47/199. The Government of Belarus had done everything possible to facilitate the practical implementation of that approach.

56. Mr. HANDIQUE (India) said that operational activities were the very basis of multilateral cooperation. The apolitical nature of operational activities had led to their broad acceptance by the Governments and the people which they were intended to benefit. They had made use of available human and other resources in developing countries and had helped to establish and strengthen national institutions. Developing countries, therefore, were concerned at the decline in resources made available for such activities and at the stagnation in official development assistance and uncertain prospects for global economic recovery. His delegation appealed to the United Nations to undertake measures to neutralize any adverse effects that might ensue.

57. While India continued to be among the major recipients of funds for operational activities, it had also become a significant donor, despite its severe resource constraints.

58. It had been agreed that the United Nations system must be more responsive to the needs of developing countries and that those countries had primary responsibility to determine and develop their capability to execute programmes and projects funded by the United Nations system. That should continue to be the norm. Among the reasons for the success of United Nations development activities thus far were the application of the principles of universality and partnership and the proper stress given to the programmes and priorities of the recipient countries. His Government supported the trend towards an emphasis on integrated human development. The operational activities of the United Nations system must be directed towards redressing imbalances in growth, terms of trade, debt and access to markets.

59. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, at a time when the number of recipient countries was increasing and new challenges had emerged, developed countries appeared to be reluctant to contribute to the development system. Even though General Assembly resolution 47/199 stressed the need for a substantial increase in the financial resources to operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. Steps must be taken to curtail the rising administrative costs inter alia through the use of common premises, decentralization and national execution. The programme approach, which was more flexible than the project approach, should be encouraged.

60. The question of sustainable development had been addressed through the Capacity 21 initiative of UNDP, aimed at capacity-building in developing countries in the area of the management of sustainable development.

61. With regard to the mandate of resident representatives, it had been defined as comprising two distinct functions, support for operational activities and coordination of humanitarian assistance. The title "United Nations representative" might give rise to some confusion. There was need to give them a new title in order to enhance their capacity to perform as team leaders at the field level. The General Assembly, could simply grant them the required authority.

62. Mr. Mongbe (Benin) resumed the Chair.

63. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) said that the strengthening of the field structure was an important element in the overall efforts to streamline the efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations system. Decentralization should be viewed as a means of improving responsiveness to the needs of recipient countries and ensuring better coordination with their respective Governments. In that context, his delegation was convinced that the programme approach should be applied on a country-specific basis with the assistance of the resident coordinator. The United Nations resident coordinator and the newly opened UNDP office in Sofia, would enhance cooperation between Bulgaria and the various United Nations programmes and agencies. The office was already providing the Government with useful cross-sectoral development advice.

64. His delegation supported the further incorporation of technical cooperation activities into countries' national development efforts, as well as the principle that recipient Governments bore the primary responsibility for effective and efficient programme implementation. The emphasis on the development and strengthening of national capacities for planning, designing, implementing and evaluating technical cooperation programmes and activities as a prerequisite for national execution of projects and programme was commendable. At the same time, the modalities for national execution should not prevent countries from making use of the experience, knowledge and expertise of the United Nations specialized agencies and regional commissions.

65. His delegation commended the efforts to coordinate UNDP activities with other United Nations agencies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP), particularly during the programming stage at the country and inter-country levels. It supported further coordination and cooperation of UNDP with such specialized agencies as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), FAO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and with aid institutions and funds outside the United Nations system. There were still untapped opportunities for the greater involvement of UNDP in multi-funded projects and programmes.

66. His delegation welcomed the focus on human resources development, environmental protection, participation in development, transfer of technology, management development and women in development in pursuance of the decisions adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Those issues would continue to be at the centre of the development process in the years to come.

67. His delegation appreciated the activities in support of countries in transition to a market economy and democracy. Developments in Central and Eastern Europe posed tremendous challenges, and the United Nations system should respond to all countries in need of assistance on the basis of the principle of universality.

68. The UNDP Governing Council had approved Bulgaria's country programme for the fifth cycle in February 1993, and Bulgaria looked forward to making use of the UNDP comparative advantage in utilizing its programme resources and hoped that the currently established 75-per-cent programme level could be sustained and increased.

(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

69. The implementation of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was undermining Bulgaria's current efforts to introduce economic reforms and jeopardized democracy and social stability. The Bulgarian Government therefore hoped that the international community would understand the economic difficulties being experienced by Bulgaria and other countries of the region. His delegation was confident that the competent United Nations bodies and specialized agencies could provide assistance to alleviate the current situation.

70. Mr. SOH (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation supported the current efforts to reform the United Nations system in the field of development, and underscored the need to streamline and strengthen operational activities for development. General Assembly resolution 47/199 set the right course for the promotion of national capacity-building and self-reliance. In addition, common interpretations of the programme approach, national execution and the country strategy note agreed on that year in the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) of ACC, should greatly facilitate the early implementation of those innovative proposals. His delegation looked forward to the report to be made by June 1994 by the Secretary-General on an effective evaluation methodology for monitoring the programme approach at the field level.

71. National execution was an important means for Governments to achieve self-reliance in fulfilling their economic and social development needs. In that regard, the role of the United Nations in providing technical assistance should be strengthened as national execution became more widespread. Specific measures should be devised to increase the use of United Nations technical services.

72. While the need for resources for operational activities was increasing, the level of contributions remained disappointingly low. The 1993 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had not resulted in a satisfactory level of contributions. While those limited pledges reflected the slow economic growth and budgetary constraints of major donor countries, more efforts should be made based on shared responsibility for development cooperation. Certain programmes had already been adversely affected by the inadequate level of resources and, if contributions remained below target levels, the effective implementation of overall development activities might be undermined. It was therefore imperative to continue efforts to streamline the mechanisms for development activities in order to make optimal use of existing resources and to devise workable plans of action to ensure that resources were secured on a more continuous and predictable basis.

73. His delegation commended the measures taken by the Secretary-General to ensure a prompt, integrated United Nations response to complex emergencies through the establishment of United Nations interim offices in seven countries of the former Soviet Union. However, his delegation had a number of concerns about the functions and mandates in connection with the proposed expansion of the work of resident coordinators. For example, if a mandate of a political nature was to be combined with an economic one through a single United Nations representative system as the Secretary-General had proposed in his report (A/48/146/Add.1), those mandates would most likely influence each other and make it difficult for each mandate to be carried out on its own merits.

74. Ms. ROJAS (Venezuela) said that the United Nations system of operational activities was being adversely affected by diminishing resources, which hindered progress in the provision of assistance and the restructuring of United Nations development activities. Her delegation hoped that the ongoing reform process would proceed in accordance with the objectives and goals that had been set by Member States. The developing countries had demonstrated a great sense of responsibility and the political will to maintain the viability of the system in the field of economic and technical assistance; what was currently needed was the final political decision that would put an end to the deadlock over the composition and number of the future governing bodies of the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system. Once that question had been resolved, the Organization would be in a better position to consider the modalities for financing operational activities.

75. Her delegation supported the view that individual countries should have autonomy in the planning and design of their national priorities through the formulation of country strategy notes and the execution of programmes and projects in the field by the agencies of the United Nations system, in particular by the resident coordinator. Her delegation also supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/7 on operational activities for development in particular the paragraph dealing with the universal, voluntary and multilateral nature of the operational activities of the United Nations system. In that regard, it was necessary to maintain the current mandate of the resident coordinators, who should not assume functions of political representatives of the Organization.

76. The Secretary-General's report on the United Nations interim offices (A/48/146/Add.1) had raised serious concerns for a number of countries, in particular, the developing countries. Her delegation had been pleased to hear that the Secretary-General had not intended to give the interim offices political authority or functions. The question of the United Nations interim offices required further study, which should be based on a continuing dialogue between Member States, the Secretariat and the competent bodies and agencies in the field. Once the scope of the Secretary-General's proposals were clarified, it would be necessary to consider the relationship between the interim offices, the resident coordinator and the other representative directors of other funds and programmes. Moreover, the question of financial implications should be given priority attention, particularly with regard to sources of financing.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.